

A
PROPOSAL

Offered to the
COMMITTEE

OF THE
Honourable House of COMMONS,

APPOINTED

**To consider of Ways for the better pro-
viding for the POOR, and
setting them on Work.**

And now under their Consideration.

THAT the Laws now in force about Va-
grants, Rogues, Beggars, Lewd Women,
Bastards, &c. and also the Laws about
the Settlement of the Poor be comprehen-
ded in one Statute, that so they may be more easily

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under-

Comm. [1699]

understood by those who shall undertake the Care of the Poor.

That the Laws about Providing for and Employing the Poor be still in force, where new Corporations for the Poor are not settled.

That Encouragement be given for erecting Hospitals, Houses of Correction, and Work-houses for Maintaining and Employing the Poor of this Kingdom, in all the Counties, Cities, and Towns, under the Management of Corporations, settled either under the Great Seal of *England*, or by Act of Parliament; or by the Justices of the Peace in their Quarter-Sessions.

That where these Corporations are settled in Cities or Towns Corporate, the Poores Rates of all the Parishes be united into One, and equally raised on the Inhabitants, according to their Estates, both Real and Personal; except in *London*, or other very large Places, which may be divided into several Corporations, by discretion of the Justices, who may bring the Charge to an Equality, either by joyning rich Parishes with poor, or by making the richer Corporations contribute to the Poorer.

That the Corporations in the Country be not extended so large as to comprehend a whole County, the Poor thereof being too many for one Corporation to govern, but rather confined to a Hundred or Hundreds, whose Parishes to be comprehended in One, and each of them

them to contribute to the Charge thereof, not by bringing them to an equal Pound-rate on their Lands and Personal Estates, which I fear will discourage them from uniting; but by taxing every Parish according to what it paid before, there not being the same Parity of Reason for this way of Rating in the Hundreds, as there is in Cities and Towns; because in the Hundreds the Parishes do not receive an equal Benefit from the Labour of the Poor of other Parishes, as they do in Cities and Towns; yet this may be referred to the Justices of the Peace to proportion, which, I humbly conceive, is all can be done, except you make this Law compulsive.

That the Sums of Money to be raised for this Work, shall not exceed what was paid in one of the last Three Years for the Maintenance of the Poor in all the Parishes thus united.

That these Corporations shall be obliged to maintain all the Poor impotent People within their Jurisdictions; to provide Work for those who are willing, and to force those to work who are idle, and to assist those poor People whose Labour will not maintain their Charge.

That Hospitals, and Work-houses, and Houses of Correction, shall be erected in convenient Places, under the Government of each Corporation; wherein the impotent Poor shall be provided for; Vagrants and Idle People punished, and kept at Hard Labour; Young People

ple of both Sexes bred up to work till the Age of Sixteen, and also taught to read ; and the said Corporations shall have power to bind them out Apprentices, the Boys to the Age of *and the* Girls to the Age of *or time of* Marriage. Which Hospitals, Work-houses, and Houses of Correction, shall be built at a general Charge, to be raised in proportion, according as each Parish pays to the Poor.

That the Governours of these Hospitals, Work-houses, and Houses of Correction, in Cities and Towns Corporate, be the Mayor and Aldermen, together with a number of Guardians chosen out of each Parish ; and in the Hundreds, all the Justices of the Peace inhabiting therein ; also a number of Inhabitants chosen out of each Parish, in proportion to the Sum of Money it pays ; which Choice to be made once in every year, when one half of them which were first chosen shall go forth, and the remaining half shall stay in for the next Year. The Electors in the Cities and Towns Corporate to be such as pay One penny *per Week* to the Poor in their own Rights ; and in the Hundreds, the Freeholders of Forty shillings *per Annum* ; and in Case of the Death of any Guardian, another to be chosen in his room, by the Parish for which he served ; which Elections shall be made on the *in Courts held in each Parish by the Justices, or* Church-

Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor, or the Constables.

That these Guardians shall chuse a Governour, Deputy-Governour, Treasurer, and Assistants, yearly; and shall hold Courts, and make By-Laws for the better carrying on this Work; shall appoint how many of their Members shall make a Court; shall settle the number of their Assistants; and shall adjourn from time to time; but shall be obliged once in every Calander Month at least to hold a Court; which shall be held by the Governour, Deputy-Governour, or one half of the Assistants.

That the Court do once in every Year, or once in Six Months, agree how much Money will be necessary for the Maintaining and Employing their Poor for the Year or Six Months ensuing, and that this be certified in each City and Town-Corporate to the Mayor, and Aldermen, of that City and Town-Corporate; and in every Hundred, to the Justices dwelling within the said Hundred, at a Meeting to be held for that purpose; who shall proportion the said Sum regularly on each Parish, and grant out their Warrants to the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor to assess it thereon, and afterwards, other Warrants to collect and pay it in to the Treasurer of the Corporation; and if the Mayor, and Aldermen, in the Cities and Towns-Corporate, or the Justices of the Peace in the Hundreds, shall refuse or neglect by the
space

space of Days next after such Certificate made to them, to issue out their Warrants to the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor to make such Assessments; or after such Assessments made by the space of Days, to issue out Warrants for the gathering of the same, and paying it to the said Treasurer, that then the several Corporations shall by their own Warrants under their Common Seal, require the said Churchwardens and Overseers to do the same; and if they neglect by the space of Days after the issuing out such Warrant by the Mayor, and Aldermen, in the said Cities and Towns-Corporate, or by the Justices of the Peace in the said Hundreds, or on their neglect or refusal, by the said Corporations, to make Assessments, and gather and pay the same to the said Treasurer, then the said Corporations shall have power to levy the same on the Offenders, for the use of the said Corporations.

That all charitable Gifts given for the use of the Poor, after the erecting of these Corporations, shall belong to that Corporation, of which the Parish is a part, to whom it is given.

That each of these Corporations be one Body Politick in Law, and may sue and be sued, and may, without Licence in Mortmain, purchase, take, and receive any Lands, Tenements, or Heriditaments, and transfer the same, and any Goods and Chattels whatever, for the benefit of the said Corporation.

That the said Courts shall have these powers following, *viz.*

To

To Summon before them any Inhabitants within their Jurisdictions, to answer to Matters relating to the said Corporations.

To appoint a Common Seal or Seals for the benefit of the said Corporations.

To buy Necessaries for putting the Poor at work.

To compel all People who seek to them for Relief, or ought to be maintained by them, to dwell in their Hospitals and Work-houses.

To inflict reasonable Correction on all poor Persons in their Hospitals and Work-houses.

To examine what Poor shall come to reside in any of their Parishes, and to send them by their Warrants to the place of their last legal Settlement, or to bring them before the Justices in order thereto. (Appeals as before.)

To apprehend Rogues, Vagrants, Beggars, loose and disorderly Persons, and to cause them to be set at work for Years in their Work-houses, Hospitals, or Houses of Correction.

To chuse and entertain necessary Officers, and to pay them out of their Stock.

To certifie, what Money will be necessary for building Hospitals, Work-houses, and Houses of Correction, and to raise it as before, and when raised, to buy or build such Hospitals, Work-houses, and Houses of Correction.

To set down and agree on what Terms they will receive Honorary Guardians.

These Corporations not to have power over

any Alms-houses, Hospitals, or other charitable Gifts already settled; but that all those Gifts which have been given in general terms for the use of the Poor, shall be in them.

No Officer in these Corporations, by reason of such Office, shall be liable to the Penalties mentioned in an Act made 25 Car. 2. for the preventing the Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants; because this may keep out many People, who may be very instrumental in carrying on this work.

The Treasurer of these Corporations to account with such Persons as they shall appoint; and to make up his Accounts annually.

Forfeitures to be levied by Sale of the Offenders Goods, by warrant under the Hand and Seal of the Treasurer.

That the Poor employed in the Woollen-Manufactures be paid for their Work in Money, and not in Goods, by all who do employ them.

That the Rates of Spinning be set every Year by _____ and that the pound of Wool delivered out to the Poor to be Spun by any Manufacturer, do not exceed 16 oz.

A Clause to secure those from unnecessary Suits who shall Act by virtue of this Law.

*All which is Humbly Submitted to the Wisdom
of this Honourable Committee.*

John Cary.